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*To Rev. Prof. Lee
with the Author's Compliments*

- ① On the History of the Idea of Atonement among the Hebrews from the Time of Amos (circa 800 B.C.) to the Liberation by Cyrus from the Babylonian Exile (circa 540 B.C.).

GRADUATION THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS OF
M^CGILL COLLEGE, IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE STATUTES OF

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BY

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THE S I S.

The story of a life must be interesting, but the history of an idea has a manifold interest, because it is the story of many lives. It is the history of life as it is ever springing into being, ever handed on from one individual to another, gathering the vigour of many ages. Men are not solitary units whose history must be a collection of independent chapters, but they are a long line of heirs, each generation of whom inherits the mental wealth of its predecessors, and may squander the treasures or may multiply them many times.

Students of merely material organisms have begun in these later days to wonder whether the Creator's plan for filling this world with life may not include some law ordaining that one generation shall hand down to its successor a more highly developed material constitution than it received from its predecessor. Such a hypothesis is but a tardy reflection of the laws which psychologists have known for many centuries. For it is a very old doctrine, and a truth long known, that souls advance in refinement, in adaptations, and in adaptability. We may hand down to our children a higher spiritual organism than we received from our fathers.

Now, as the subjective organism may advance, so also may objective spiritual possessions be increased. The child grows daily more familiar with the intellectual possessions of the father, with the wealth of knowledge which the father gained by hard toil. The child may inherit all this wealth more easily and surely than wealth of gold, and in his turn he may amass new stores, multiplying, deepening, widening, refining what he received, proceeding easily to new discoveries on the basis of the old, to new applications, which had seemed utterly impossible to the father.

The inherited ideas become the long connecting threads for many successive generations of individuals. The thoughts of men become the warp on which the history of the race is woven. We lose almost entirely the strong interest which sometimes chains us so subtly to stories of individuals when we begin to study the history of a nation, of a race, of a great chain of living links, where each soul moves and works as an independent self, while nevertheless all the units are intimately dependent, each on all who live about it, and on all who came before it.

Here an infinity of infinities work together onward, ever combining and recombining according to definite laws, describing an intricate but beautiful complex of paths. Little wonder that from early ages the history of mankind has been told and heard with so much eagerness, told to please or to soothe the youngest, sung by the rapt poet as he gazed into the far off past, searched critically by the mature student, studied with far more attention than has ever been given to any mere material subject.

Moreover, while the student of history has watched a multitude of spirits all busy in common action, the nearness of a Controlling, Creating Spirit has been immediately and constantly suggested; while, on the other hand, the study of mere matter has seemed often powerless to suggest a moving spirit within the matter and utterly unlike it. The history of men and of their thoughts is a living, spiritual thing, and seems all-pervaded by that Being whom we call God. The evidence that He is near startles us, and then attracts our awed curiosity.

Yet this presence of God in history has been the very check to thorough historical study. Men have not been afraid to ask the truth concerning the Great, Unseen Spirit; rather has the veil which hangs between our eyes and Him heightened our curious desire to know. But when we believe that we have discovered the truth concerning Him we are wont to decide at once that to doubt our sacred truth were sacrilege, and that our faith concerning God is as certain as Himself, as unalterable, as far beyond fault or correction. Thus it comes to pass that our official history of the knowledge of God is often a collection of venerable traditions. In other departments of science scholars have been more free to examine, to reject, to adjust any doctrine, old or new; but in the history of thought concerning religion it has too often seemed right, and exclusively right, that official teachers should preserve and repeat unchanged only the opinions expressed by the leaders of some peculiarly prominent age. When utterances which were once sublime have grown inadequate for the altered facts, even then inadequacy of statement has seemed mysteriously adequate, and the mystery has seemed strangely appropriate, suitable because incomprehensible, full of fitness because the meaning could not be fathomed.

The story of the growth of religious opinion, and especially of such growth among the Jews before the coming of Christ, has been left thus sacredly untouched; not indeed neglected, but carefully sealed away from the light. Religious history, furthermore, has been regarded justly as centring in Christ; but, in addition to this, it has been supposed that all history of this kind can be viewed aright only from the standpoint of the first Christian century. The centuries which followed that may indeed be correctly understood when thus seen, for they are then viewed in their natural order and in due perspective. But the preceding cen-

turies have been seen backwards, while seen from that standpoint; or at least, all events have been seen upon the same plane, all illuminated with wrong lights and in false colours, all in unjust proportions and mistaken relations. The events and characters of pre-Christian Jewish history cannot be rightly estimated if seen through the eyes of the first Christians. A mystery has arisen like a cloud shrouding the grandeur of the Old Testament records, and working no good, for it hides from us the ineffable glory of the revelation of God.

But the truth of that message from God which Christ has revealed is gaining a strong hold of men, and re-moulding their modes of thought. We are learning that to know God is life, and ignorance is not the mother of devotion. It is not pleasing to God that we follow mysterious utterances, for mystery is misleading. It is becoming evident, and men are coming to the faith that the knowledge of God is not far off, but may be gained by constant examination of His work, of His Providence, of His past guidance of men, of His gifts to them, and of the history of their growth of which He is the cause. Since the history of men's thought is especially the story of God's work, that history must be ever more and more closely searched to the end that our knowledge of God may become more true, more real. As we know more, and know more certainly that we do know, we shall have ever fresh life and shall have that life more abundantly.

We are to discuss in the following pages the progress of thought in particular directions, as that progress may be learned from the records in the Old Testament, which we so justly hold sacred. The question will at once arise:—Does not the general assumption that the contents of these records are Divine revelations preclude the possibility of explanation of these records by the ordinary laws of mental action and development? Is it not *a priori* impossible to write the history of the prophetic teaching? The questions almost answer themselves. But in any case we need hardly debate here whether the Author of Revelation would ever be likely to forsake those methods of revelation which He actually prefers in an overwhelming mass of important cases. God does reveal truth in most known cases through the observation and reflection of those who receive the revelation. These men observe material and spiritual phenomena in which God's work is to be seen, and they reflect upon the results of their observation with the consequence that they believe they learn the Divine laws of man's duty; and they proclaim these laws to their fellows, and men obeying live and are glad. Moreover God facilitates these processes by causing mental power to grow and knowledge to accumulate from generation to generation. Now, it may possibly come to be evident that knowledge cannot be received in any other way, that God has established this way as unavoidable, and that

therefore His law is that truth shall not be revealed in ways which exclude these usual modes of mental action and development.

But we do not need to discuss these *a priori* questions. The naturalist does not stay to meditate what the plants and the rocks ought to be, but he first of all observes and records what they actually are. The plans and laws of growth may then be fairly deduced. In like manner it must be our first duty to observe and set forth the sequence of men's thoughts as seen in their works. We may then fairly classify the phenomena and point to any subsisting connections and suggested lines of development. In so far as these are accurately traced they must be of Divine purpose, and cannot conflict with the Divine laws of revelation.

It is a truth of great interest that while we study the growth of religious knowledge among the Hebrews before Christ came we are studying how God gave His Son. He caused His Son to be born into our race, and this is a great joy to mankind for ever. It must, therefore, be a joy to study the spiritual and mental history of that people among whom Jesus arose, among whom he was born in due time of the seed of Abraham. In due time the parentage was ready, ready in its mental relations as in all other respects. What was the mode of preparation, of spiritual advance towards full fitness?

We are to discuss now the history of one fragment of Hebrew religious thought, and the discussion will be only tentative, not a complete exhaustion of the field. The topic chosen is of great interest, for it is rightly held that the beliefs concerning atonement in any religious system are of central importance. The religious teacher who believes that there is separation between God and men will surely preach some method of reconciliation. If he understand the heart of men he will always preach concerning atonement, for every human heart cries out at some time for God. Every heart knows some bitterness and some longing for friendship with the Great, Unseen Spirit; there is ever some ear ready to hear how the soul may enter into alliance with its Creator. Sometimes as we study preachers of the past we shall find that many have believed an alliance to be already established, a covenant with a whole nation to be already made, and in such cases a theory of atonement will be implied rather than directly preached. The preacher will seek to manifest and magnify the relation, to purify it rather than to establish it. But it will be found that as the worth of the individual soul grows in the preachers' estimation, and as the purity of the nation becomes in their eyes the more dependent on the purity of the individual soul, in the same proportion will they seek out the individuals who seem to be separate from God, and they will exhort these to be reconciled. They who preached of a covenant existing will preach now an atonement.

The preacher of Isaiah liii. spoke in such an age, and atonement was his theme, although he revealed his own spiritual descent from men who had believed in a national covenant with God, for that covenant-nation still existed for him as a precious ideal, and as a reality seen by God. We may not here anticipate the exposition of that chapter and its setting which must be given hereafter, but we may observe that because that wonderful sermon answered individual cries for help, and was preached out of a deep sympathy with men, and not merely with a nation, therefore it has remained ever fresh and life-giving, beautiful and true for all who have read it in these twenty-three hundred years since it proclaimed peace to the Hebrew exiles. Let us study now the advance of thought which culminated in that sweet, solemn sermon of life. We shall begin, for obvious reasons, with the first of those Hebrew preachers who were also writers. A previous chapter of the history must be pre-supposed, a chapter which would involve exposition of intricate problems, whose data must be gathered chiefly from the tendencies of the writers of political history living in the times to be considered, and gathered also from very formal or very meagre descriptions of customs, gathered, too, from documents whose dates are, in all cases, hypothetical. The chapter would include an account of the host of preachers who arose among that little people, a people so remarkably thoughtful concerning religious truth, and singularly sensitive to the moral revelations of God, as well as to the hints of his personal nearness to men. The earliest of these preachers thrilled his hearers' hearts long before the days of Samuel and his company of young fellow-preachers. Samuel was the last, and perhaps the greatest, of those chiefs who earned their position by their skill in the days of the independence of the Tribes, and as a prophet-chief he illustrates the great power of religious eloquence, and the religiousness of the people in those generations. It was very natural that there should grow up a doctrine of a covenant between these tribes and their God. Perhaps this doctrine helped the shepherd monarch in his consolidation of the tribes, as doubtless the political union helped to establish the doctrine as orthodox and national. The doctrine was proclaimed by brave preachers through the reigns of David and Solomon; while at the separation of the kingdom into two, a host of men, starting from this covenant as their text, condemned the division and the causes which produced the division, and thereby broke the covenant, or, on the other hand, welcomed that division as the only relief from evils which seemed to make the covenant worthless.

Whatever beliefs were preached, it is noticeable that preaching had become a great power, and was growing greater. At every momentous juncture in affairs, whether it were a time of external invasion, or of internal revolution, we read of many preachers. Sometimes such

mighty men as an Elijah or Elisha were heard crying above the storms of passion, crying aloud in strong confidence in their sense of right or wrong, and saying, "Thus saith Jahweh, the God of Israel." The profound impression which such men produced is seen reflected in the proportionately very large space which the historian devotes to their story. Their influence is perhaps also to be observed in the rise, soon after they were gone, of the race of preachers whose sermons were counted worthy to be written, that they might be often read again. These sermons the generations who followed judged worthy to be preserved, until at length high regard grew to reverence, and even to superstitious veneration. We, in these later days, admire that ancient judgment, and repeat the reverence, sharing even at times the superstition. But the sermons are evidently most valuable to us as monuments of the actual religious thinking of the times when they were composed. We therefore turn to them for the materials of our history as to photographs of the very men who preached, and of the audiences who listened or read.

AMOS was the first of these preachers whose sermons are still certainly extant. He preached in the beginning of the eighth century B.C. HOSEA followed him immediately, as did also the earliest of the three men whose writings are combined in the book of ZECHARIAH. These men, Amos, Hosea, and the earliest Zechariah, preached in Israel, the northern kingdom, where the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II., the greatest king of the Jehu Dynasty, had now lasted well nigh half a century. Great prosperity had brought in luxury, and luxury had brought licentiousness. The first of the preachers named above reflects the character of society while the great king yet lived. No wonder that the other two tell us how, when Jeroboam was gone, when the skilful king no longer held the reins, there soon arose and multiplied lawlessness, oppression, revolution. The preachers declared that the national covenant with Jahweh was broken, and while they cry of coming judgment they begin to speak also of reconciliation. Let us briefly enumerate the preachers who followed, that it may be clear what writings we must examine when we proceed to study their teachings in detail.

In the middle of this eighth century appeared ISAIAH, the prince of all the prophets, preaching in Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom, and followed or perhaps accompanied by MICAH, preaching also chiefly in the south. Israel, the northern kingdom, was annihilated by Assyrian armies in 722, but Judah escaped as Isaiah had believed and preached. Throughout the seventh century Assyria was gradually sinking into effeminacy and ruin, and Judah was left in peace, apparently almost unharmed by outer enemies, until near the century's close; while domestic quiet is at least suggested by the long fifty years' reign of Manasseh and the reflective and somewhat formal character of the period.

The times were tranquil, and the DEUTERONOMIC sermon which was discovered in 622 seems to represent the period fitly by its earnest yet retrospective and calm style of exhortation. Down to the time of its discovery there had been quiet, but when it was coming to the light many preachers were appearing, and this appearance was a mark of troubled times, as the like appearance had often been before. NAHUM, ZEPHANIAH, and JEREMIAH began to preach now, when the Scythian hordes were ravaging the regions to the north and pouring southwards towards Egypt, striking terror into the heart of Judah, but in the end leaving the little kingdom among the mountains unharmed. The people were no longer warrior-hearted, for a growing tendency to religious formalism is a product of decay and reproduces its own cause. While the aged Jeremiah preached and wept, and while HABAKKUK wrote his call to courage, weakling kings were weakening the nation until it fell an easy prey to the rising might of Babylon. Jeremiah bewailed the ruins of Jerusalem, where the conquerors had left him among the little remnant who were not hurried away to slavery; but in the end these few, in their frightened flight into a voluntary exile in Egypt, carried with them the venerable preacher, as if bent on reducing all that was still worthy of honour amongst them back into the very bondage whence their God had so long ago brought them forth.

EZEKIEL beheld his visions, preached his gentle sermons, and fancied his ritual beside the streams of Babylon. For the people of that exile also, for the Jewish slaves in Babylon between the years 560 and 540 B.C., were written the last twenty-seven chapters of the book of Isaiah. To these exiles was proclaimed the great doctrine of Atonement contained in the fifty-third chapter of that DEUTERO-ISAIAH.

We may now recapitulate the list of preachers, giving with each his date, as nearly as possible, as follows:—

AMOS, <i>circa</i>	610-580.	780-760
HOSEA, „	580-onwards.	750-730
ZEPHANIAH (I.), <i>circa</i> ...	580.	300
ISAIAH (I.), „	740-700-700;	
MICAH, „	725-	
DEUTERONOMY, discovered 622, and representing the religious thought of the generation from	650-620;	
NAHUM, . <i>circa</i>	640-625;	
ZEPHANIAH „	630;	
JEREMIAH, „	625-580;	
HABAKKUK, „	600;	604
EZEKIEL, „	593-570;	
ISAIAH (II.), written for an audience whose date is ...	560-540.	

Other short sermons were written for these exiles and are found here and there in the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah.

The dates show that we have a full series of notable representatives of Hebrew religious thought throughout a period lasting for about 250 years. It is strange that the history of their teaching has not been more thoroughly investigated by English theologians than it has been. The writings are brief and in general easily mastered by the ordinary Hebrew scholar. Surely the task is not too insignificant; but even if it were a little task, its accomplishment is plainly the duty of the Christian theologian.

We turn now to examine in detail, yet briefly, the teaching of each of these preachers in its bearing upon means of restoration of sinful men to righteousness and happiness.

Amos reveals no hope of restoration of the sinner. Throughout his book we read continually denunciation of sin and warning that evil-doers shall be cut off. He strikes the key-note of his book in the first words, "For three transgressions and for four — I will not restore" (i. 3; ii. 6). It is the nation as a whole that he condemns, although he frequently addresses rulers and other individuals as national representatives (iii. 1; iv. 1; v. 1); and although he is conscious that there are some righteous souls, God's servants, among the people, which righteous ones however he seldom mentions. His thoughts, and hopes, and exhortations, and promises concern chiefly the nation. He expects that a day shall come when all Israel shall be truly Jahweh's people (ix. 9, 11, 15), and his closing passage is a description of that blessed day. But that future righteous day is not to be brought in by repentance and reconciliation of evil men, but by the rooting out of the evil-doers (ix. 10). Amos's doctrine of purification is not a doctrine of redemption or restoration, but of punishment and retribution. There are, indeed, passages in the book, elements in its thoughts, which make it certain that Amos would soon have advanced to higher conceptions had he been a speculative thinker, which he was not. He is absorbed in the work of uttering judgments, not of justifying these. And yet his unquestioning confidence in the justice and the very divinity of his judgments could not have existed without a latent sense of their reasonableness. There was, indeed, a sturdy common-sense in Amos which would have guided him to grand results had he been a reasoner. He regards a sinful man as something very different from a useless weed. The evil weed cannot change its nature; but Amos knows that an evil man can change his course, and therefore the preacher exhorts the loose, careless, and shortcoming Israelites to seek Jahweh. If they will only seek good, Jahweh will be with them indeed (v. 14, 15). Here is a hypothetical theory of restoration; but Amos evidently expects that it will never be realised (v. 13, 16; vi. 10). For the sinful will not seek Jahweh, and therefore there shall come an evil time, captivity, desolate fields and homes, where only

the lonely wail breaks the stillness. Jahweh does not purpose to bring back men who will not turn back themselves; but His decree is that all the sinners of His people shall die by the sword (ix. 10). Then shall Israel be pure (ix. 9), sifted as in a sieve, and not the least grain of good wheat lost; then will Jahweh set a descendant of David to be their ruler (ix. 11), to govern them in their own land; for in that land they shall be planted to be no more pulled up. Amos's doctrine of atonement is therefore that of a stern moralist who can only bid men do right, and warn them that they who do wrong shall be cut off, to the end that the nation may be left all righteous, and thus restored to holiness. Amos is a preacher of sin and judgment, an apostle of salvation by fire.

Shall we say that he took but a superficial view of moral nature, that he did not think profoundly, else he would have proclaimed a better gospel? We must remember the time when he preached and that his audience were a society whom prosperity had made licentious, steeped to the hands, and lips, and eyes in cruelty, in debauchery, in lust. He was a wise man who saw that ruin must follow, and it was a loving heart that led Amos away from his home in Judah to warn the people of Israel. It was a sound judgment that chose dreadful warnings of an inevitable destruction of evildoers as the best means to arouse even these evildoers themselves. It might be that they would seek good and find God. Then they should be amongst the righteous who should be saved. But Amos seems to believe they would not turn, and this possible salvation should never be realised.

True reformers are stern while evil is strong; but when judgment has fallen and the people are troubled, then God's preachers begin to preach tenderly. We turn to listen to one who illustrates this truth.

HOSEA arose as Amos passed away, perhaps about 780 B.C., when Jeroboam II. was soon to be gathered to his fathers. In a very few years the nation was in anarchy, for there seems to have been an interregnum from the death of Jeroboam for twelve years. Whether those twelve years represent a wild reaction from the firm control of Jeroboam or a fierce civil strife for the throne, we know not. We only know that in the end Zechariah the son of Jeroboam was king. The settlement was only a lull in the storm (iv. 1). The king was soon murdered by a conspirator, who seized the throne, but fell himself as rapidly as his victim (cf. v. 7, with 2 Kings xv. 8, 10, 13). Regicide, revolution, disgraceful and divided counsels, appeals for help from Assyria or from Egypt (v. 12; vii. 11; cf. 2 Kings xv. 19, 20; Hosea viii. 9; ix. 3, 6), according as one party or another prevailed at court; invasion by the one foreign nation or the other; tribute paid until (x. 5, 6) the very idols of gold went to appease the greedy strangers; unfaithfulness, revolt from the foreign alliances (vii. 16; x. 4), fresh invasions; all these are the features of the picture which Hosea vividly paints.

He begins his first discourse with a note of tenderness that seems to whisper of coming redemption (cc. i.-iii.). He tells a tale of a husband's ill-requited affection, all the more tenderly told because the trouble appears to have been Hosea's own. In that story of love for one who proved unfaithful (c. ii.), the wail of the deceived heart ever and anon alternates with an uttered hope that the wayward one will return to the ways of peace (ii. 7). For the husband knows that trouble must come upon the faithless one (iii. 4) and then she will repent (iii. 5). So the spouse of Jahweh, who has been also faithless, must be carried away to the desert, and when she tastes desolation there she will remember, she shall come to know the way that is righteous and peaceful, and she will turn to her God, her husband. He loves her ever and will receive her and bless her again. The affliction shall work out for her the peaceable fruit of righteousness (ii. 19; iii. 5). The fathers have often told their children how, long ago, the valley of Achor became a vale of tears for the young nation (ii. 15), and then in consequence became a door of hope. The greed of Achan, the story said, was a sign of sin and weakness in the nation, and that led to defeat; but when in the valley of Achor the people repented and laid down their greed by the execution of Achan, they marched up out of the valley to victory. The seer reminds his audience of the story and says it was prophetic of the coming troubles. The day of sorrow should be the day of salvation, for in trouble men would reflect, would then see and understand Jahweh's ways and His love, and they would then quickly turn to duty and to life.

Hosea believes he has found the root of the sin, and declares that revelling in wine and lust unman the heart. Knowledge cannot dwell where debauchery prevails, but when affliction isolates men from their revels, then they will think, and know, and do right. Force must be therefore the means of saving. By force they must be shut off from their demoralising delusions. Therefore Jahweh will afflict that he may save from the ignorance which is the seed of sin, and from its fruit which is destruction. It is a beautiful theory and thoughtful. It includes the doctrine of Amos, yet advances greatly beyond it. Hosea preaches excision of evil, as did Amos, but while Amos regards the righteous only as saved thereby, Hosea believes that through their temporary excision the evildoers also shall be saved.

This sketch of his theory would be, however, incomplete without indication of its probable genesis in Hosea's mind. That seems to have resulted from his theory of the people's peculiar relation to Jahweh, and this again, perhaps, to have received its peculiar colouring from Hosea's position. He was probably a man of high rank, and intimately acquainted with the springs of political action, for he describes the purposes and movements of the governments with the confidence of familiarity, a con-

fidence which Amos never intimates. He was not unlikely connected with the religious officials—perhaps himself a priest, a כֹּהֵן (cohen), a courtier. Indeed the word כֹּהֵן, translated usually “priest,” meant really “ruler’s attendant” in earlier technical language (2 Samuel viii. 18), as also its etymology from כָּן “stood” naturally permitted. Hosea might be expected to believe strongly in the national and established doctrine that Jahweh had made the Hebrews His peculiar, covenant people. He alludes again and again to the past history of the two kingdoms, drawing arguments from it, and especially from its evidence that Jahweh peculiarly loved Israel. From this doctrine of the people it was easy to advance to the belief that their badness was not incurable, not heart-deep; that, indeed, within each Hebrew there was a good nature which would at once choose the good, if the good were only seen; and, moreover, that Jahweh’s love would not suffer any to be lost, but would procure the saving knowledge, even by severe chastisement.

The simple, stern Amos may now seem more true to the facts of nature than the speculative, cultured Hosea; but there is a spiritual truth concerning the gracious, regenerating work of God which Amos did not see at all, while Hosea, groping in dimness, felt some of the tenderer features of God’s plan for building humanity, and suggested what a greater man was soon to set forth in richer fulness and greater beauty. Ere we reach Isaiah another preacher claims attention.

In the little book which bears the name of ZECHARIAH, the writings of three men are set together, those of the youngest, a post-exilic preacher, standing first (cc. i.-viii.), and those of the oldest, a man of the period now under discussion, standing second (cc. ix.-xi. and c. xiii. 7-9). Perhaps all three writers bore the name Zechariah, for we know that two pre-exilic preachers were so called (2 Chr. xxvi. 5, Isaiah viii. 2). The writer of Zechariah (cc. ix.-xi. and c. xiii. 7-9) probably preached to both Judah and Israel while Hosea was working in the north. He reflects the troubled state of the people and enthusiastically preaches hope, yet not with deep insight. Perhaps he illustrates for us better than Hosea the opinions of common men in his time. The earlier part of his few chapters is full of expectation of material deliverance which Jahweh will work for His people (ix. 1-17). Jahweh will do this because a blood-covenant has been made (ix. 11); a covenant with Him has been ratified by sacrificial feasts. Thus Zechariah has a true idea of the nature of His God as the sole mover of all things, and therefore the only Saviour; but he does not speak of salvation as a moral change. His theory of sacrificial efficacy for atonement is rather a presage of the post-exilic delight in sacerdotalism and the refined ritual of the Levitical laws.

If his atonement in his earlier sermon seems like that preached by Hosea, we find him later on preaching a doctrine more like that of

Amos. He has come to know more fully the outrageous greed and cruelty of rulers and the wealthy, and he cries in loud denunciation. "Hear their wretched religion. They say: Blessed be Jahweh, for I am rich! The riches are spoils from poor, obedient Hebrews, the flock put in these men's care. For this sin there is no atonement, only purging as by fire. These evildoers must be cut off!" Both theories, therefore, were current, that of Amos and that of Hosea, without in every case the speculative explanation which Hosea gives. We must also regard Zechariah as standing on a lower ground than did Amos, for while Zechariah hates sin, because it prevents material prosperity (xi. 2, 4, 5), Amos evidently sees in it what prevents justice, what is morally bad and repugnant.

A mightier man than all these three was soon to appear. When trouble followed sin in Israel, preachers had arisen there; and now forty years later, when the weak Ahaz of Judah receives from a far worthier father the chieftainship of the south, and surrounding himself with effeminate councillors seems likely to hurry Judah to confusion and destruction, like that which was swallowing up Israel, then the great ISAIAH begins to preach to king and people in Jerusalem. Amos of Judah had gone as a missionary to Israel; Isaiah saw the evils in his own country and sought to save Judah. It is a difficult task to describe Isaiah. We must not attempt here to expound more than his peculiar teaching on the one subject before us.

The ideas of those men who had taught before him re-appear in his sermons. He was a man of his time in every sense, and had probably read the words of the preachers already described, as he certainly re-echoes their opinions. Like Amos he speaks of purification by eradication of evildoers, saying (iv. 4), "When the Lord hath purged away all filth—by a judging and burning wind—then shall every one left catalogued among the living in Jerusalem be called holy." Again he speaks comfort in words (xxviii. 7 ff.) that are almost Hosea's, "When they shall see the work of My hands in their midst," "then they will hallow My name," for "they have erred in judgment through strong drink" (xxix. 22-24). He inherits the legacies of thought, and even of words, left from the past; and while he does not copy from any, he thinks over again the old beliefs and casts them again in a form that is thoroughly his own. These old teachings have become secondary, however, for the preacher has mined below them to deeper truths, has found a basis from which these older truths are consequences, and these older doctrines, although appearing somewhat changed, are now all the more true.

Isaiah speaks of the nation as a whole, and seldom of the righteousness of individuals. In close connection with this and in illustration of it is to be viewed his remarkable belief that God has peculiar delight in

Jernusalem. Jahweh has chosen Mount Zion for His favourite abode (ii. 3; iv. 5; x. 24; &c.), and will therefore guard that spot sacredly from all enemies. Thither shall all mankind come as to the centre and source of all good, of all knowledge of God and of happiness. Here he is like Hosea, as might naturally be expected, for Isaiah must have been a man of high culture. He was a companion of kings and, doubtless, strongly attached to whatever doctrines might be called religiously national, and, moreover, he lived in Judah, where national good order had prevailed almost unbroken for four hundred years, and had lent a rare and ever more fascinating charm to established and patriotic beliefs. We look on Isaiah's fond faith as the faith of a child and as peculiarly pre-Christian, and yet Isaiah saw much of the kingdom of God. His poetic soul might easily find great truth in his doctrine of God's people and God's home.

In spite, however, of this poetic doctrine, and his seeming disregard of the individual soul, Isaiah really teaches the true value of the separate soul by appealing to the reason of men, that chief mark of individuality. Herein lies the secret of Isaiah's greatness, that he knows the central spring of moral life, and in his preaching aims again and again to influence that (i. 18; v. 1 ff.; x. 15 ff.; xxviii. 23 ff). This feature exalts his sermons far beyond those of his predecessors, and makes them sermons for all ages; makes his book indeed a classic.

Intimately connected now with this feature is Isaiah's doctrine concerning man's renovation. He has grasped the great truth that the spirit of God would influence and change men through their spiritual nature. Hence he teaches that Jahweh will make the coming king of Judah all that a king ought to be by causing the Divine Spirit to abide upon him (xi. 2), to work in that prince wisdom and understanding. Then he shall find pleasure in the fear of Jahweh. It is important to note that the passage now quoted is the opening of what may be called Isaiah's Sermon on Restoration (cc. x., xi., xii., especially c. xi.). The text is his oft-repeated watchword **שָׂאֵר יִשְׁבֵּה** (Shear Jashubh), "A remnant returns" (vii. 3; x. 20, 21, 22; xi. 11, 16; xxviii. 5; xxxvii. 4, 32), words so dear to Isaiah that he would have them always before his eyes, and to this end gave them as a name to his son. He expects invasions by foreign enemies (x. 6), desolations by the hand of these hosts which the angry Jahweh will use like a rod. The nation shall almost disappear under the sword and in captivity and foreign slavery (vii. 20-25). But "a remnant shall return," and even now in vision the preacher seems to see the restoration (x. 21, 22; xi. 11), because he believes that a great spiritual change shall overtake rulers, and through them the ruled. As the preacher thinks of that change and of its blessed consequences the poetic fire is kindled, and he fancies even a change in earth's physical nature wrought by the Creator as fitting

preparation of the abode of the purified people. The passage is an extraordinary poetic picture, but flows gracefully from the pen that has just recorded the great doctrine that spiritual influence must produce the change in the moral character of the people, and that a people morally, spiritually purified must be worthy of God's best temporal blessings. This doctrine raises Isaiah far above Amos and Hosea; his teaching is so far profounder than theirs that he furnishes a foundation on which they might teach their own doctrines more securely; and Isaiah, as we have seen, may repeat almost their very words, with a deeper meaning of his own. Eradication of evildoers who refuse the spiritual influence becomes now most reasonable. Knowledge may be the means of salvation if that knowledge includes new moral vision, if the willing soul become ready to follow the path of duty which it knows.

And yet only one part of Isaiah's grandeur is seen if we think only of his exalted view of the soul. His doctrine of Jahweh's intervention to work the spiritual change is the grand correlate in his thought (ii. 3, 11, 17; x. 20; xxviii. 5). This second doctrine is not less strikingly set forth than that first described. The beautiful psalm (c. xii.) which closes his discourse (x. 5—12 end), in defiance of the Assyrian invasion expected in 721 B.C., opens with the shout of joy, "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, I will not tremble;" "therefore will I praise my God Jahweh." "Jahweh loves Judah and Israel, and has chosen Zion as His favourite abode, where He will dwell in our midst." As the preacher has woven into one brief phrase his belief in coming salvation, and bound the words about the life of his child in the name "Shear Jashubh," so he coins another golden motto from which he may preach to his people concerning the Divine source of salvation. That motto יְמִנּוּאֵל (Immanu-El) "God is with us" (vii. 4, 14; viii. 8), is like the former name so precious that Isaiah binds it also upon a living bearer, gives it as a name to a child. It is interesting to observe that while Hosea, as well as Isaiah, records beliefs enduringly in names, the former has written upon his children's story words that mostly tell of sin and sorrow (Hosea i. 4, 8, 9); but Isaiah's children's names (Isaiah vii. 14; viii. 1; ix. 6) tell chiefly of a Saviour and a people saved.

We may sum up Isaiah's doctrine of atonement thus—he appreciates as none had done before him the need of Divine help for helpless man, and the need of spiritual influence to convert spiritual beings. "When the spirit is poured from on high upon them," then the work of righteousness shall be peace (xxxii. 15-17).

We must reluctantly turn from this very brief account of Isaiah and hasten on to look at men who followed him.

MICAH was probably later than Isaiah in beginning to preach, although they must have been contemporaries (cf. iii. 12 with Jeremiah

xxvi. 18). This preacher has much in common with his predecessors, especially with Amos and Isaiah; indeed he seems, one might almost say, to have been a pupil of the great preacher, although he seldom rises near the heights of confidence where the master walked with God.

Micah's sermons fall easily into three divisions, viz. :—(1) cc. i. to iii.; (2) cc. iv. and v.; (3) cc. vi. and vii. There are certainly characteristics common to all, and yet, in the first of the three divisions, denunciation of wrong-doing prevails almost exclusively. Amos had preached that evil-doers should be cut off, and the righteous left alone in the land, but Micah scarcely hints in this first set of sermons that any may be saved. He hardly alludes to a possible separation of good from evil. All are sinful, and judgment is coming upon all. The sinfulness of sin and its sad deserts fill all his thoughts with scarce a respite, and we must look further in the book for any hope of restoration. The second series of sermons is preached from a venerable text (iv. 1-3), which Isaiah himself had also chosen as the basis of a discourse (Isa. ii. 2-4). Both evidently took the words from a sermon of an earlier preacher. Micah quotes it as a promise of deliverance for the nation by the work of a prince of Davidic descent, but he writes it across with fears lest, by the arm of Assyria, judgment come upon the land, even while that promised prince is reigning (v. 5), and also afterwards, during the government of many of his descendants. We look for light, but gloom spreadeth over the dawning.

We search the last section of Micah's book, and are instructed, but also disappointed. The section 'contains an exposition of the preacher's idea of true religion. He gives an ideal sketch of the true Israelite, the ideal man of God, who, with brethren like him, shall form the nation hereafter, when the great regeneration shall have taken place (vi. 6; vii. 2, 7-10, 17-20). But we are disappointed in our search, for we do not learn how the change from present evil to future purity is to be accomplished. Micah gives no exposition of regeneration or of atonement.

Yet we may observe in the sermons the growth of the doctrine of an ideal Israel, and this doctrine was the foundation of the Babylonian Isaiah's doctrine of atonement. Micah describes beautifully the true people of Jahweh, telling the audience whom he utterly condemns that there may be unseen holy men (vii. 2) who bow before Jahweh only, asking Him what tribute they should bring (vi. 6-8), offering not ritual performance and sacrifices, but the best gifts of love and honesty, of godly sorrow over the nation's sin and suffering. These cry: (vii. 7) "We will look unto Jahweh, our saving God. We will wait, we will bear His indignation. For who pardoneth as He doth. He delighteth in mercy." We do not learn absolutely nothing of any way of salvation

from Micah, for this passage points to Jahweh as the God ready to pardon, and so like Isaiah Micah preaches Divine intervention (vii. 18), and, indeed, exhibits a bright belief that this pardoning proceeds from the very tendencies or nature of Jahweh (vi. 6-8). Moreover, Micah's negative declaration has important positive significance. He will not preach sacrificial atonement, and in his opposition thereto he agrees with Amos and Isaiah. Even Hosea does not advocate sacerdotalism or sacrifice.

Another inference may be drawn from this passage. The preacher who writes such words loves God truly himself, believes, looks upwards through his tears, with a trusting heart. Out of the conscious certainty of his own friendship with Jahweh rises the vision within him of a future people who shall all be God's friends. Micah does not tell us how that future is to be reached, but in part this is the result of his own beautiful humility, which abides unconscious of itself; and therefore also he does not tell us of the means of conversion, as he might have described these from his own subjective experience. Yet his honest silence preserves him from faulty theories, and does not obscure the clear picture of himself, a man redeemed of God.

We pass onward to the seventh century. We should be almost wholly ignorant of the religious condition of the first half or three-quarters of this period, 700 to 600 B.C., if it were not very evident that the Book of Deuteronomy was discovered in the reign of Josiah of Judah, *circa* 622, and found then immediately a ready response to its exhortations. The people had, therefore, been growing towards this readiness to respond, and the years of that growth, that is, the previous seventy-five years, may be seen reflected or answered in Deuteronomy. We need not discuss here the date of its authorship, for, in studying a book as a monument of the history of religious thought, it is enough that we know the date at which the book was recognised as a perfectly authoritative teacher, that is that we know the age with which the contents corresponded religiously. The Book will be an authoritative picture for us of the people who found in it a תּוֹרָה (Torah) "Instruction" exactly suited to their circumstances and modes of thought, and who at once began to use this as a guide. A comparison of Deuteronomy with the story of Josiah's Reformation (cf. 2 Kings, cc. xxii. xxiii.) will reveal to a careful student that Deuteronomy was a sermon received by Josiah and his people as directly adapted for them. We may point for evidence to one characteristic of the sermon which will be of use to us in our present doctrinal examination, and which illustrates also the principles just stated. Consider the Deuteronomist's earnest counsel that henceforth Jerusalem be the only sanctuary. How remarkably different is this from the Sinaitic, or earlier law (Ex. xx. 24, 25), that there may be an altar

wherever Jahweh appears and records His name, and how remarkably is the Deuteronomic direction unlike the early practice of worship and sacrifice at many sanctuaries, a practice exactly accordant with the quoted Sinaitic law. That practice had been followed in the days of the Judges, and by Samuel, David, and many others after them (Judges vi. 24, &c.; xii. 19; xvii. 12; xviii. 30; 1 Sa. vii. 9, 17, &c.). The custom of confining sacrifice to Jerusalem began to grow up after David had taken that city in battle from aliens and had made it his capital. Before that time it was not a Hebrew sanctuary; but Solomon built in it his magnificent temple, overshadowing in glory all the old Houses of God, and attracting all Judah, later on even Israelites from the north also, to itself. But even after Hezekiah's time the older custom was still observed (2 Chron. xxxiii. 3) as the late historian naively relates while he condemns it. He condemns it because in his day the new custom has come to be regarded as alone pleasing to God (cf. 1 Ki. xii. 32; xiv. 23; xv. 14; xviii. 31 ff; xxi. 43; 2 Ki. v. 17-19; xii. 2, 3; xiv. 3, 4; xv. 3, 4). This influence of religious custom on opinion is one of the most constant features which God has given to our nature.

From Solomon's time onward Jerusalem was gaining importance and permanent sacredness. Josiah's reformation seems to have been the culminating act of national abandonment of the ancient Bethels, the national popular acceptance of the newer sanctuary. Now Deuteronomy exhorts to this very action with all the same earnestness that a man might have who lived amid the reformation and earnestly desired its consummation. Thus Deuteronomy was a book for the time when it appeared, and in it we may see the tendency of religious thought in the first three generations of the seventh century. Without this book and this use of it, there would be a gap of seventy years in the line of monuments of the Hebrew religion. With Deuteronomy's help we can picture to ourselves the course of thought after Isaiah and Micah had passed away, and before Nahum, Zephaniah and Jeremiah arose. The century opened in comparative quiet in Judah. The Israelites had been already many years in captivity (since 722), but the Assyrian conqueror's scourge was breaking. Assyria was already decaying towards her utter extinction a century later. Judah was thus freed from the dread invading armies, and at liberty to meditate and enjoy material comfort in the long reign of Manasseh, that continued half a century. In such a period men speculate concerning religion rather than practise or experience it. They build theories of righteousness and devise formal ways of pleasing their God; and they may come to set very peculiar and narrow limits to the pleasure of God. In such a period the beliefs and words of great teachers who have passed away are expounded, grow venerable and authoritative; and the honest regard for the Divine strength, and truth, and inspiration of

such teachings grows into a feeling, powerful although vague, that these teachers are the very representatives of God, and indeed His only representatives. There is no occasion for the prophets who preach cheering or warning words in the name of God, for there are no great dangers—and the comforts in possession are regarded as a sign of Divine complacency. The younger, more restful age submits to the elder: the children are happy in listening to the words of the fathers.

So do we find the Deuteronomist endeavouring to scatter among the people the knowledge wherein Hosea taught that salvation lay. A large part of the book is discourse on the ways of God toward the Hebrews through the past ages. The writer discourses, as he distinctly says, to the end that the people may know and keep and do the will of Jahweh their God (iv. 5-9, 39, 40; c. v. 1). Again, Isaiah's enthusiastic belief that Zion was peculiarly sacred has become to the writer's mind the cardinal tenet, and he expounds the consequences of the dogma, and the means for its full enjoyment (c. xii.). Priesthood and sacrifice are important now as never before, in order that the great sanctuary may be manifestly sanctified. Certainly the Deuteronomist prescribes the merest elements of a sacerdotal and sacrificial system in comparison with the elaborate ritual of Leviticus and the Chronicler, and the returned exiles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Indeed, he rather emphasises the doctrine of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, that Jahweh desires not sacrifice, but justice, mercy, and humility (cf. Deut. x. 12, with Amos v. 21 ff.; Hos. vi. 6; Micah vi. 7, 8; Isa. i. 11-17). And yet, in Deuteronomy we shall find the doctrine manifestly implied that atonement may be made for the whole people by one class. This class is not the descendants of Aaron, as the Levitical law ordains it shall be, but the whole tribe of the Levites, who, we may observe, were also all priests in the days of the writer of the greater part of the books of Kings, and of other writers living in the end of the seventh century (xvii. 9, 18; xviii. 1; xxiv. 8; Jer. xxxiii. 18; Ez. xlv. 15; and cf. 1 Kings ii. 27, with 1 Sa. ii. 27-35). This seems a degeneration from the belief of those earlier days, when it was written that every Hebrew was a priest, and Israel a nation of priests, a priestly nation. (Ex. xix. 6). The grand faith of that writer was a thing of the past. So, too, was the glorious confidence of Isaiah, which he had cried aloud in the word, "Immanu-El"—"God is with us." That fellowship with God had not then been restricted to the Levites, but all men might abide in company with God, and every house might be a sacred place. The words were still true sacerdotally, but not spiritually, not universally. Men were becoming afraid of God as they leisurely thought of Him; they could not approach him in the old childlike simplicity; therefore they set apart a class from the business of the farmer and the merchant, bidding that class sanctify themselves for the work of mediation between God and

men. This was the new doctrine of atonement, and it seems less honourable than what had gone before it. Yet, in reality, there are in it elements of advance, and it was certainly the stepping-stone to something far higher; it was the necessary step in advance. For it was the sign that the old doctrine of the covenant nation was breaking up, was no longer true or trusted; and that doctrine disappeared because the need of an atonement for all the people was becoming profoundly felt. Henceforward the subject of busiest religious meditation would be, not the Divine preference for this people, but this people's need of Divine compassion. The Deuteronomic doctrine of an atoning tribe could not endure, but it pointed in the direction of the truth ultimately to be discovered and eternally to endure—the Babylonian Isaiah's doctrine of atonement by the righteous for the unrighteous. The Deuteronomist descended from the grand idealism which seems impossible to be realised to a realism which could never be true, but that realism had to be seen to be very transitory ere men returned to the ideal, and by spiritual strength rose to comprehend that the ideal and spiritual alone is true and eternal. The Deuteronomic theory may be regarded as a reflection of the mental processes in operation during the earlier half of the century under discussion, and a study of the narrative of Josiah's reformation will make it fully evident that we have, indeed, now described the doctrine of atonement held by king and people in that reign. We shall find this confirmed as we proceed to study the preachers who were now arising at the sound of the dangers that were threatening from abroad.

NAHUM wrote his book about 630 B.C., and speaks chiefly of Assyria, which was now staggering in the weakness of emasculation and was soon to fall before the gathering strength of the Chaldeans. Possibly he alludes to devastations in the Euphrates valley by the Scythian hordes. The book is a song of glad rejoicing over the certainty that the ancient enemy was soon to be no more. The ground of the prophet's assurance is the character of Jahweh, for the God of Judah is Almighty and He loves this people, and therefore He will overwhelm the enemy utterly, as He is already beginning to do. Nahum is not a man to see far off clouds. The present events and their evident result fill his thoughts, shutting out the reflection that possibly the destroyers of the Assyrians may become a new scourge for Judah. The deliverance for which the preacher hopes is material salvation, and it proved in the end to be only temporary. Ought we not to have expected that the first preaching which followed a period of ease, of comfort, and of formal thought and worship would be far weaker, far less spiritual than that of the anxious, busy century which we first studied?

ZEPHANIAH wrote a few years after Nahum. The great Scythian hordes which had swarmed across the Caucasus and along the eastern

side of the mountains whence flow the head waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris had ravaged Media, thence crossed into the rich Euphrates valley; and finally, as if they had singled out the great, wealthy nations for their prey, they crossed about 626 B.C. from the upper Euphrates to the Syrian coast and marched southwards toward Egypt. All Judah trembled lest these barbarians should overrun their land and sack their sacred city. Zephaniah preached in the midst of this anxiety. He believed that the danger was a judgment of Jahweh for the sin of his own people and of the ravaged foreign nations (i. 6, 12; ii. 4 to iii. 8). But like Isaiah he sees in Zion the favoured dwelling-place of that great Jahweh who controls and sends the scourge (iii. 5). That God will defend his abode, and besides, He is a just God and will do only right. Like Amos, Zephaniah cries, "Seek righteousness, it may be that ye shall then be saved," for evildoers shall be cut off (iii. 8, 12), and only the righteous remnant, as Isaiah taught long before, shall be saved (iii. 9). But Jahweh will touch men's hearts and lips; He will teach them a pure language that they may cry acceptably "Jahweh, Jahweh." The tide of trouble rolled back before Zephaniah's eyes. The Scythians hurried past towards Egypt; they turned back northwards along the coast road. They plundered Philistia, but on each march they left Jerusalem unharmed. The happy preacher bids Zion sing because she has now seen that God is with her, and the "Immanu-El" of Isaiah is indeed true. Zephaniah reveals frequently in his words the influence of Isaiah upon him, and his doctrine is like that of his master (iii. 5, 9, 13, 17). The earlier preachers in Josiah's reign were more confident than was JEREMIAH, who preached chiefly towards its close, and who foresaw the coming evil. Josiah probably ruled with a firm hand. His power must have been great, else he could not have accomplished his reformation. But a stern religious control which tends towards sacerdotalism does not educate a vigorous people. Josiah's sons did not prove like their father; perhaps they had been weakened morally by his training. They were unequal to the task of resisting on one side the oppression of their Egyptian suzerain, or on the other the Chaldeans, newly risen to great might, victorious and thirsting for wider victories.

These Babylonians were one of the very oldest of the nations. They had lived in plenty and luxury on the rich delta of the two great rivers. They had multiplied and had overflowed their borders; and the young offshoot people had emigrated up the river valleys and founded the Assyrian kingdom in very early times far up the Tigris, near its sources. The new home was far less hospitable than the mother-land, and soon on the rugged hill sides and in the rough, hitherto untilled valleys, ploughed by the torrents from the snowy mountains, the Assyrians became a sturdy people, a strong military nation. At length the vigorous child warred

against its parent and the parent became the vassal. But now in these later centuries luxury had bred effeminacy in Assyria, and the enervated people, ruled by a worthless king, fell in 606 B.C. before the combined strength of the Chaldeans and the Medes. All the nations that had trembled at the name of Asshur took courage. Egypt thought to become mistress of an empire reaching far into Asia, and had already pushed towards the north-east in 609 B.C., when the king of Judah, Josiah, ventured to oppose the Egyptian advance, and fell himself in the battle of Megiddo on the plains of Esdraelon, leaving his kingdom a prey to the conqueror. The people of Judah set Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, on their throne, but the lad had reigned only three months when Pharaoh deposed him and set his brother Eliakim, or Jehoiakim, in his stead, thus declaring to the people their vassalage. Jehoiakim was king for eleven years, and at first paid large tribute to Egypt. But in 605 the Egyptian army had reached the Euphrates at the town of Carchemish, and here the Chaldeans, now victorious over Assyria, met them and heavily defeated them (Jer. xli. 2; 2 Ki. xxiv. 7). Henceforward Judah was tossed about as a ball from the one to the other of the great rivals, and beaten hard on either side by the one or the other, ground by them alternately for tribute until after Jehoiakim's death and the three months' reign of his son and successor Coniah, or Jehoiachin, the Chaldeans carried away 10,000 Jewish soldiers, craftsmen, and princes as slaves to Babylon. Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, was left as king over the poor remnant, but he was soon tempted to turn for help to Egypt; and his country fell again under alternate oppressions until the annoyed Chaldeans razed city and temple, carried away again a great multitude of the better ranks as slaves, leaving a few terror-stricken people to do tillage on the desolated fields. But these soon fled from the dreariness and from their fears, hoping for safety in Egypt. Thus Judah was carried away, and fled away out of their land. Through all these troubled years JEREMIAH was preaching. Let us observe how during these years this preacher developed the teaching of previous ages.

Jeremiah was himself a member of a priestly tribe (i. 1), and yet he protested against belief in salvation by ritual or priestly representation. He declares that the temple and even the ark and the rite of circumcision are powerless to save, and shall soon be utterly forgotten (iii. 16; iv. 4; vii. 4). And yet he belongs to the Deuteronomic age, and we may see in him the influence of its speculations and products. He exhibits acquaintance with the very words of the great Deuteronomic discourse, and insists on obedience to the Deuteronomic directions for Sabbath observance and for treatment of slaves (cf. xxiv. 5-7; xxix. 13, 14; with Deut. iv. 29; xxvi. 16-19; xxx. 3-5). It is important, however, to observe that these regulations which Jeremiah supports had not been enjoined as

based on a theory of peculiar connection with God, but as dictated by the principle of benevolence (cf. xvii., 22, and ch. xxxiv. with Deut. v. 14; xv. 1-18). We find again in Jeremiah the influence of the preachers of the eighth century. Like Amos, and almost with Amos's own words, he cries "Seek Jahweh and return to Him" (xxix. 13; iii. 12; iv. 1, 2; vi. 16; xv. 19). Sometimes that form is chosen which Isaiah gave to the exhortation, "Wash thine heart" (iv. 14; ii. 22). Hosea's doctrine of knowledge, the power of affliction to teach knowledge, and of knowledge to save, has become a cardinal doctrine for Jeremiah (xxxi. 33, 34). Jahweh will bring upon Judah the threatened judgments to the end that they may "know Him" (c. xvi. 21, *et passim*). He will do thus and thus, and they shall know that He is Jahweh. The name, יְהוָה, "Jahweh," signifies "He causeth to be or stand," "He establisheth," He fulfilleth His word. Thus the declaration of Jeremiah that they shall know Jahweh means—they shall know God's character, that He doth bring to pass. To Jeremiah it seems much more difficult to teach this knowledge than it seemed to Hosea; and the preacher has now no doubt that the ignorance is guilty ignorance. Isaiah's favourite belief that a remnant should be restored is echoed by Jeremiah (iv. 27; xxviii. 3-6); but a wider, more practical, less imaginative significance is now given to the doctrine of the need of Jahweh's spiritual influence to renew the heart and restore men to holiness (xxiv. 7; xxxi. 33; xxxii. 39, 40). Jeremiah enlarges Isaiah's watchword "Immanu-El" into the Divine Oracle "I am with thee, to save thee" (i. 8; xv. 20), combining thus the two beliefs, belief in God's presence and belief in His saving character, into one gospel of assurance for souls that must reason while they cry for help. Jeremiah advances another step in the comprehension of the divinity of salvation, expanding the belief of Micah that the nature of God leads Him to save men. He preaches that Jahweh will save men for the sake of His own name. The people of Judah and all the peoples of the earth shall see that He fulfils His promise of blessing, and when the salvation has come He shall be known by a new name, not "Jahweh" only as heretofore—but "Jahweh-Cidhquenu," יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ "Jahweh is our righteousness," or "Our righteous Jahweh," "Our righteous Establisher" (xxiii. 6; xxxiii. 16). Jeremiah applies the name to Jerusalem, but the salvation which makes men pure is declared by this name to be the great work of Jahweh. Clearly the preacher emphasises the value of character—the precious character of God as constant and gracious, the character of men as that which is to be saved.

This leads us to the observation of a feature in Jeremiah's own character which constituted an element in his teaching and labour for the purification of his people. We have seen that he was not a sacerdotalist, although he was by birth a priest. Yet in the highest sense of the word

he was a priest to mediate and intercede for men, for he might be called the "Man of Prayer" of Old Testament story. Ever and anon he breaks forth, in the midst of exhortation, into a cry to God for his people's deliverance, or for help for himself that he may move them (vii. 16; x. 23-25; xiv. 7-13, 20 ff.; xv. 15; xvi. 19; xvii. 13-18; xxxii. 17-25). We have seen that כֹּהֵן, so often translated "priest," means really "one who stands," it may be "before an earthly sovereign," or "before God" in His holy place. Jeremiah stood thus, before God, to plead for Judah, to offer himself as intercessor, and indeed as atoning sacrifice. For when we now look farther into his life we see therein remarkable indications of the rise of the doctrine of intercession and atonement by righteous men for the unrighteous. Jeremiah had evidently wondered whether some men might not make atonement for others. He says on one occasion (v. 1), in the name of Jahweh, "Run, see, seek, if ye can find in Jerusalem a man, if there be one who doeth righteousness; and I will pardon it." He reveals again the meditation of his heart, with its despairing result, when he says, "Although Moses and Samuel stood before Jahweh" to atone for this people, "yet His soul would not turn towards them" (xv. 1). And yet Jeremiah makes, almost unconsciously although really, a distinction between such a formal unavailing atonement as that would be, and an effectual atonement which a man may make for others. For he himself seeks to lead the people to righteousness, and pleads that God's peace may shine upon them; and giving thus his whole labour and life for them he becomes gladly a real way of salvation for such as will hear and turn to Jahweh. Indeed, he tells us of his own suffering, of the contempt he endured, of the conspiracy which well nigh took his life, as the life of Jesus was taken 650 years later; and the passage (c. xi.) in which Jeremiah tells the story of the murderous plot by men who despised him is of peculiar interest in our present investigation. He writes (xi. 19, 20) "I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter, and I knew not that they said, let us cut him off from the land of the living." "But, O Jahweh of Hosts, that judgest—let me see Thy vengeance, for unto Thee have I revealed my cause." Surely these words and the story of this great hero of the last days before the exile were the suggesting motive that lay in the mind of the great writer who, fifty years later, uttered the words (Isa. liii.) "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter—he was cut off out of the land of the living. He shall see of the travail of his soul." "To whom is the arm of Jahweh revealed?" Surely it was when the later poet-preacher thought on these things that the fire was kindled within him, and in the Divine inspiration of his spirit he drew that wonderful, never-fading picture which seems ever with the ages to grow more full of life and beauty.

Jeremiah's words and life were not forgotten. A striking familiarity with his book and preaching is evident in the generations that followed him. While he was preaching and pleading there shone near him for a little while another brilliant light amid the people's gloom.

HABAKKUK has left us a few of his utterances, but these, and especially the sublime poem of his third chapter, make us wish that we had much more. He preached probably about 600 B.C. Like Jeremiah he talks with Jahweh of the evil he sees everywhere about him, injustice, violence, debauchery, greed, worship of idols (i. 2, 3, &c.). He prays that Jahweh may send deliverance (i. 2), and in his prayer he reveals his faith that there are a righteous few who now suffer (i. 13; iii. 19), but who shall be delivered. These men have firm reliance on Jahweh, and Jahweh can rely on them; therefore they shall live (ii. 4). Habakkuk declares, with an allusion to words of Jeremiah, that he himself will rejoice in Jahweh as his Saviour, even although all earthly comforts fail (iii. 17-19; cf. Jer. viii. 13). It is important to observe this additional sign of belief in the existence of a righteous few, righteous in their faith and character in the midst of a people that is held to have lost its title to covenant holiness. Another illustration of this belief is probably furnished by a contemporary, the writer of the story of Elijah (1 Ki. xix. 18), a story which was probably published nearly in its present condition about this time. The tide of thought is flowing in this direction, and further evidence hereof will appear presently.

We look down the years of the new century until, about 593 B.C., EZEKIEL begins to preach. His work was done in Babylonia among his Jewish fellow-slaves after the storms of conquest were over, and when the comparative quiet of the exile encouraged meditation. We read that the exiles sat at times by the rivers of Babylon and thought on Zion (Psalms cxxxvii. 1), and the words fitly describe Ezekiel. Ezekiel was less original as a thinker than Isaiah or Jeremiah, and needed more material aids in his conceptions. He uses more symbols than do these others, tells of more visions, depends more upon ceremonies as means of devotion. He seems to see God riding upon cherubim, and elaborates (cc. xl.-xlviii.) in Babylonia a political and religious scheme for the life of those who shall return from the captivity to Canaan. These facts mark him as a man of the Deuteronomic type, but not a Deuteronomist of the same class with Jeremiah; for while Jeremiah echoed chiefly the moral teaching of the great sermon, Ezekiel carried its religious and ceremonial theory a step farther, moving on towards the refined ritualism which the returned exiles loved. Ezekiel preaches, as so many did before him, the need of knowledge, and the purpose of God that men shall be taught by their troubles (v. 13 *et passim.*) Again and again he declares that "when God shall have judged the people" thus and thus,

"then they shall know that he is Jahweh" (vi. 9, 10). When they know, they shall loathe themselves, and thus repentance shall be wrought. We seem to hear Hosea's voice again preaching this ancient doctrine of purification. Like Isaiah he preaches that a remnant shall return from the exile (vi. 8; xi. 13-20), but the salvation of these shall not be material only. Their hearts shall be changed, for a new spirit shall be put within them (xi. 17-20; xxxvi. 25-27; xxxvii. 14; xxxix. 29). The teaching of Isaiah has borne rich fruit, fruit more evident now than it was even in Jeremiah's preaching. The doctrine of the necessity of spiritual change is no longer the belief of one great, bold preacher only. "The esoteric has become the exoteric," the doctrine is evidently already familiar; and the individuality of the soul and the spiritual nature of holiness shall never again be utterly forgotten.

Ezekiel repeats Jeremiah's speculation concerning the atonement of man for man, of righteous men for their sinful brethren. The latter had asked himself whether Moses and Samuel might thus mediate; Ezekiel thinks of Noah, Daniel, and Job for the great task. He declares, indeed, that it is vain to hope that these might save more than their own souls from the judgments deserved by this evil generation (xiv. 12-23, but note especially verses 22, 23). Yet this very declaration reflects most probably a growing tendency among men towards belief in the need and the possibility of vicarious atonement through suffering. Not once only does Ezekiel need to controvert this growing hope. He protests (c. xviii.) against the popular idea expressed in a common proverb, that the son might bear his father's sin, or might, on the other hand, inherit his father's good deserts (verses 2, 19, 20). Indeed, we have seen that a tribe of priests, the Levites, had been set apart to make atonement for the nation, and this fact confirms the opinion which we have gathered from the preachers' efforts. The people felt already that they were not all holy, that some one must bring them holiness, and the preachers had advanced a step beyond this. Jeremiah and Ezekiel saw that a merely representative atoning tribe, or company, or man would not, could not save. A formal atonement was useless. The preacher protests, not against the doctrine of vicarious atonement, but against a false interpretation of a truth which was dawning upon men, or which God was revealing. He says that Jahweh sought for a man among the people that should stand in the gap (xxii. 30), that should close up the defences of the land, that it might not be destroyed, but he found none. But Ezekiel sees evidently that there is some mysterious truth in the great common yearning for such a man to fill the gap. The prophet is the utterer of the truths which God reveals in manifold ways to the prophet's age. He forbids the useless hope, but thereby, evidently, he is forbidding his own yearning. That yearning grows out of the national abandonment of a

belief that has proved baseless, out of the national belief that some new hope must be found, and out of the uncertain apprehension amongst the truly, divinely, thoughtful men of the time that there is a vision of truth, of saving truth just at hand. Ezekiel unconsciously stood upon that truth, and illustrated it as Jeremiah had already done. They worked it out, although it was not to be proclaimed as the clear, undoubted doctrine for a generation yet. Like Jeremiah, he worked and suffered for the people (cc. iii. iv.). Ezekiel had a very definite theory of the saving work which the preacher, as a watchman, may do for men. The truth and excellence of his theory lies herein, that it is a theory of the influence of man on man, of mind's influence on mind, of the persuading power of the well-weighed, spoken word upon the free, intelligent hearer. This theory of homiletics Ezekiel taught and followed. His figure of the great audience of whitened bones is but a figure. His preaching was always directed to an audience of living men, although the people might indeed say that they were a slain nation, and that their life was all withered away, their human hopes all lost (xxxvii. 11-13). The preacher believes and cries that God's true message, the message of their Jahweh, is that His Spirit shall rest upon them, and thus resting shall produce a life, a holiness, possibilities, realities which their dead hearts cannot hope for nor conceive. Then shall they return to their own land, to live a life grander than the former days ever saw, for Jahweh has spoken, and He also performeth. Thus Ezekiel laboured to bring men to their God, to bring life from God to men, to make atonement. And indeed he knows many others who are labouring thus with him. He has spiritual vision, and although he cannot see with earthly eyes a man fit to stand in the gap (c. xxxiv.); yet in spiritual vision he does see a true flock (vrs. 12) who have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Ezekiel is advancing toward the conception of an ideal, unseen, yet real people of God. In his meditation where he rises to this height he reaches back (vss. 23-25) for a vehicle of his thought to the poetic prophecy of Isaiah, written 130 years before, that Jahweh will make a covenant of peace with this people in the glorious future to come; a descendant of David shall be the prince; evil beasts shall cease out of the land; men shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. Thus Ezekiel falls back upon the doctrine of the great Isaiah of the past in the same passage where, as we shall see, he unconsciously anticipates the great Isaiah still to come.

The preparation lies now nearly ready in history, and in the religious thinking of preachers and people, for the final stage in the development which we set out to trace. We turn to the BABYLONIAN ISAIAH, the author of chapters xl. to lxvi. in the Book of Isaiah, the remarkable sermons commonly known as Deutero-Isaiah.

I need not stay to discuss here just when the writer of these chapters lived, and when they were composed. Indeed, the question of authorship, often so vexed and perplexing, need scarcely be discussed amongst necessary prolegomena to our theological use of these books, if we be only careful to use the results of exact investigation respecting their age, and the people for whom they were written and on whom they were intended to exert the usual influence of written exhortation. We have seen this illustrated in the case of Deuteronomy. In the case now before us, it is enough to know that whoever wrote these chapters wrote them for the people of the captivity, wrote them as if he himself were one of the captives. The leading supporter of the theory that the chapters were written between 750 and 700 B.C., by Isaiah in Judah, distinctly asserts that that writer "speaks through the whole twenty-seven chapters from the standpoint of the exile," and "nowhere betrays the difference between his actual and his ideal position" (see F. Delitzsch *Comm. zu Jesa.*; 2d edn., Leipzig, 1867, p. 410, l. 10-14). Thus even if the writer prove to have been a man who lived in Judah in the eighth century, it is granted by all students of the text, whom we need to consult, that for the purpose of preaching this series of sermons the author became in all respects a preacher of the sixth century, endowed for the time thoroughly and only with the characteristics of an exile in Babylonia. Those who believe, on scholarly grounds, that Isaiah of Judah was the author, hold that he was endowed for the time of this composition with every qualification of experience, feeling, thought, and language for writing as if in the distant country, at the distant date, a date 150 years later. We are fully warranted, therefore, in taking Isaiah cc. xl. to lvi. as a sermon adapted to the religious thought of the middle of the sixth century. But we are now mainly concerned with that religious condition which the book is designed to influence, and may therefore read the book as a reflection or religious monument of those who were to read or hear, and appreciate the sermons contained in it. As we have been studying the people through Ezekiel, so now we are to see them further reflected in another series of addresses adapted to their comprehension, suited to all their circumstances.

Let us picture to ourselves the occasion of the discourses. The kingdom of Judah had fallen before the armies of Chaldaea in the beginning of the century. Twice the enemy had besieged Jerusalem; and twice they had taken it, and enslaved its people. The Chaldeans had but recently risen to great power, as we have seen. Less than fifty years after they had overthrown the Assyrian empire they were themselves trembling before a power far greater than they; and in their turn they were soon to be overwhelmed. When the Jewish captivity had lasted scarce a score of years, i.e., in 560 B.C., Cyrus, the Deliverer, ascended

the Persian throne ; and, speedily conquering Media, he became the ruler of an immense empire, which stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea in the north, and thence westwards to the Black Sea. His dominions half encircled the empire of the Chaldeans.

The devout Jews in Babylonia seem to have believed at once, when the story of Cyrus's first conquests reached them, that he would also conquer Babylon, and would set them free (Isa. xl. 2 ; xlv. 28). They believed that he favoured their religion and even worshipped their own Jahweh (xli. 25). There was great joy over the prospect of freedom. The preacher's words were a message from God to comfort the mourners (xl. 1). Jahweh's anger had passed away like a cloud from above them, and now it seemed to hang black and dreadful over their masters. The preacher foretells a speedy fall of the haughty, a bowing down of Babel's proud gods (xlv. 1). The great city, mistress of nations, proudly called the virgin, having no equal, shall come to shame, although now she be so delicate, so refined and rich (c. xlvii.). All the wealth of imagery and words at the gifted preacher's command is poured out to set forth Jahweh's joy in the salvation of His servant Israel, and to kindle enthusiasm in the captives (c. xl. ; xlv. 3, 21 ; xlv. 4). To the seer's vision the caravan of freedmen is already travelling across the parched steppes that stretch between the Euphrates and the beloved land. Inspired with faith he speaks cheer to the weary, telling them that Jahweh will prepare the way for Himself and for them, for He will journey with them. Are they thirsty and faint under the burning sun that has dried up all the streams ? The preacher pictures the sudden descent of the rain and the wondrous awakening of the plains into luxuriant life (xli. 17-20). It was a figure well understood by his audience, who had seen in every autumn such an outburst of green life over regions that seemed all dead. The Almighty Jahweh will refresh them with streams and shade them beneath trees where they expect only drifting sand on the leafless plain. Their extremity shall be God's opportunity. Jahweh's servant who shall soon taste all these joys, yet sits silent, scarce awake, gloomy, slow of heart to believe, seems blind and deaf beside the vivid, intense faith of the preacher (xlii. 7, 16, 18, 19). While he is expecting such speedy deliverance, he speaks with delight of the material blessings in store for his people. It is natural that he should predict a safe journey home across the wilderness, and provision by the way for every material want. His confidence leads him farther. Jahweh has revealed for ages past to this people His peculiar love for them, and that love includes a purpose of ultimate deliverance from all evil, even ultimate exaltation over all men. The confidence rises to exulting scorn of all other nations who cannot receive such knowledge and such dignity from their gods (xlv. 9-18 ; xlv. 20 ; xlv. 5-9). The greatness

of Jahweh shall be made known to the nations by His coming interposition, and this shall strike terror into the Gentiles. They shall see and fear (xli. 5, 6); they shall find no help in their wooden gods, the solid blocks clothed in gold; they shall hasten to submit themselves to Israel, the divinely exalted people. Mighty rulers shall bow down with chains upon their hands (xlix. 23) presenting wealth and service. The captives shall be speedily set free, and the oppressors shall atone with their blood for their past cruelties. Material abasement of the masters, material greatness of Israel are, in the preacher's present view, the great ends of Jahweh's purposes and working. And yet the accomplishment of these ends is to be accompanied with great religious and moral blessing for the whole world. The liberated and exalted people shall establish justice (xlii. 1, 6) for they shall love righteousness themselves, inasmuch as Jahweh's spirit shall dwell amongst them and produce, as Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel taught, a holy disposition in all (xlii. 1; xlv. 3). Then too the obedient nations shall do the righteous will of Jahweh, and doing righteousness shall make them glad (xlv. 24), for they shall learn by their experience that peace and goodwill among men flow from Jahweh's service. But these blessings are regarded, we may say, simply as an element in the subordination of all men to this servant of Jahweh, and therefore there is a decidedly material colouring in the whole of the preacher's expectation. Spiritual blessing is to come, but the preacher does not find in it the highest good. The highest good is not compatible with material loss. Material good is the highest good; and there is no fear that it will prove to be vanity.

But the gifted seer is to see greater things than these. God unfolds His purposes a little farther and earthly hopes crumble. Then spiritual truth remains unshaken, and the faith of the prophet grasps the eternal verities. We may observe the change in the preacher's soul as it is wrought by the Divine Revealer through various Providences.

There is a change in the tone of exhortation (c. xlix.). The speaker hesitates. Events are not quite what he has expected. His hopes of a speedy termination of the exile are evidently to be disappointed. Cyrus has begun to withdraw his armies from the advance on Babylon. Far away on the western shores of Asia Minor there was a friend of Babylon ruling on the throne of Lydia. Croesus, the Lydian king, in the fancied might of his untold wealth, drew the sword in the defence of Babylon against this common enemy; but he drew the sword for the last time, and Lydia marched now to her last battles. Cyrus turned from Babylon to meet the armies of Croesus, and utterly overthrew the Lydian kingdom. But this subjugation was the work of many years, and Sardis, the Lydian capital, did not fall until 543 B.C. Not until six years later, in

537, was Babylon taken; and the Jewish slaves were set free to return to their fatherland twenty years after the failure of their first hopes.

Observe the preacher's inner struggle when his hopes are disappointed. He describes the struggle in the soul of the great collective Israel, and being himself a part of that Israel the picture of himself is given to represent the whole. He sees all Israel's feeling in his own. The changed tone is manifest in the troubled, half-hesitating words: "Although Israel be not gathered." A story of sore temptation to doubt lies in the sentence (xlix. 4), "I said, I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought." But his faith rises steadily, grandly, out of and far above the levels of material expectation now grown so cloudy, and growing daily yet more gloomy. In his confidence in God he holds the hand that will surely raise and does raise him; then, imputing this union with God to the whole collective servant of God, he says in that servant's name, "Nevertheless my judgment is with Jahweh, my work is with my God." Higher yet the hand draws the clinging soul, and as the clouds gather thicker, roll larger, he is still above them, until earthly hopes seem vanishing, forgotten. Spiritual glories wax bright and then all-glorious till, in the servant's name, the preacher cries (xlix. 5) "Although Israel be not gathered, although the chosen people do not return to the chosen land, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jahweh." There is greater glory in being the light of God shining unto the nations, the channel of salvation to all men, than in the mere return of a little nation to Canaan. Yet the expectation of subordination of all peoples to this people has not disappeared; rather here in c. xlix. does the unexpected light bursting out of gathering gloom make the gladness and the glorious expectation specially exuberant.

But another experience and a bitterer is yet to follow and to grow. We have seen the strange distinction, apparently almost unconsciously made at first, in the words, "Jahweh formed me (Israel) His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him." Is Israel Jahweh's servant, and is he also away from his God; and shall Israel bring Israel back? We are reminded of the distinction which has been growing so clear in the past generations, unwillingly and sadly acknowledged, at length accepted by formalists and expressed by the nation in the establishment of Levi as a priestly tribe. The writer of the book before us seemed in his first gladness to go back to the early days and forget the sins that he saw about him. But now again the brightness is past and the sad facts remain. Many of the prophet's fellow-exiles are unworthy to be called children of Abraham. Some utter the name Jahweh in the solemn formulas by which men are wont to call on their God, but this is not in truth nor in righteousness (xlviii. 1, 4, 8). This has been always evident, but now these men, disappointed of the promised deliverance, reveal

fully their true character. It would be natural if the Babylonian masters should exult in their release from their late terror. Doubtless these now wreaked resentment on the captives, especially on such as were but recently most jubilant over the prospect that they should soon worship Jahweh on Mount Zion. But the Babylonians were not alone in heaping abuse on them. Doubtless many unworthy Jews were even more bitter and cruel, angrily complaining that these enthusiasts had endangered every Jew's life and property. The suffering and abuse are described in the plainest, most painful words, "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (li. 6). They "have said to thy soul, Bow down that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street to them that went over" (li. 23). Thus does the meek servant of Jahweh talk with his God; and God talks with his servant concerning the pain and shame. Then the preacher speaks in the name of the actual, visible, guilty people of Israel (liii. 2), numbering himself amongst these with a true humility and wisdom; and declaring, as a story well known to all, how basely all have abused the righteous, how they have sneered at the faith that was but lately so high, how they have mocked the disappointment, saying, "Such as said they knew God's purposes have been rebuked of God for their presumption, 'smitten of God and afflicted'" (liii. 4).

How true to actual experience of human nature in any age is this preacher's enumeration of himself amongst those who abuse and sneer and mock. The line running through the family of mankind, and marking off the good, the true men from their fellows, seems to vibrate like the musician's string, whose position is ever changing, and which therefore spreads its harmony far beyond itself. Of those who yesterday rejoiced in the sunlight of hope, many may to-day join in mockery, aye, bitter mockery of the hopes that are drowned in to-day's dark waves and clouds and trouble. And of these many mockers are not some, nevertheless, precious souls, whose faith has failed but for a day, to rise again? This the preacher sees, for he is taught of God to see men truly, tenderly. Therefore he will not sharply define the individually good, nor call on them to join him in a cry of condemnation, or even of commiseration; but he will bring home to all keenly their unkind, harsh cruelty, by counting himself as one of them, and confessing for them the wrong they have done. He will make condemnation the keener by avoiding the possibility of recrimination, and the excuses which it brings.

Who then is the righteous servant who has been afflicted, wronged? If all the actual Israel are guilty of abuse, who is Israel, Jahweh's servant whom they have abused? The double use made of the term cannot have been strange, either to the writer or to the readers, else that double

use had not been so freely made. Nearly two hundred years before, Micah had portrayed the ideal man of God (Mic. vii.), as we have seen; and we have further seen growing among the preachers, and even among the people, a belief that all the historic Israel were not fit to stand before Jahweh to be His priests, to minister before Him and for Him. Jeremiah and, very prominently, Ezekiel had given evidence of this faith, as had also the popular craving for a priesthood and the national establishment of a priestly tribe. It was not a new thing to speak of the righteous Israel, who lived yet were unseen amidst the people; some said there were thousands whose names Jahweh only knew, and who had not bowed the knee to any god but Jahweh. It was a common doctrine that there was an ideal Israel amid the historic Israel.

Perhaps the preacher wished to remove, nevertheless, all opportunity for any to say, "No, there is no ideal Israel;" or he wished to make the sin appear very real and no mere sin in the abstract, to make the confession very pointed, to make the indirect condemnation very searching; for his words seem to point back to one whom he loved, whose words he often quoted, to that Jeremiah whose preaching in Jerusalem many now in Babylon had heard, whose book, doubtless, many knew, whose story was a sad reproach to the nation but a record of glory to the good Jeremiah himself. Few could but regard that holy man as one of the righteous Israel, the ideal Israel, Jahweh's collective servant. Surely many have recognised an allusion to Jeremiah's account of his own suffering when the Babylonian preacher said, "Who hath believed our report (Isa. liii.; cf. Jer. xi. 20) and to whom is the arm of Jahweh revealed? He is despised and rejected; a man of sorrows (Jer. ix. 1; xiv. 17; xv. 15; xx. 7)—he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (cf. Jer. xi. 19; xxvi. 11, 16)—he was taken from prison and from judgment (cf. Jer. xxvi. 16, 24)—he was cut off out of the land of the living (cf. Jer. xxxviii. 4, 6). He shall see of the travail of his soul" (Jer. xi. 20). The rehearsal of the sufferings of Jeremiah at the hands of Israel surely awakened the conscience of men who had now repeated the like abuse in Babylon. The preacher's soul is all awake now, and busy pondering on what he knew before, but had forgotten in the hour of glad expectation. Israel needs atonement. And there is another strange, sad fact: righteous men suffer—Jahweh's righteous servant suffers sharper pain than all other men. "What mean these things? Great Jahweh, Cause of all, reveal Thine arm! Tell us; what doest Thou?" We may almost hear the burdened soul cry and sigh in struggle to loose the problem of Revelation, to understand what truth Jahweh means to reveal by these revelations of His providence. We see the kindling eye, we hear the trembling voice, "Yea, hath not Jahweh done all this Himself. He has afflicted His servant. His great

purpose, His highest gift may include suffering. The great service of the righteous may be to suffer." But is the salvation of historic Israel to be forgotten? That seemed once to be God's grand purpose. Are the guilty in Israel to be left unsaved? Is there to be no righteousness for all; no glory for all Jacob, for all men? The prophet's faith answers these questions gladly, for the truth is evident now. It includes all these separate truths which seemed so antagonistic. They all unite to make the one grand doctrine, "Our God Jahweh is working the atonement of sinful Israel by the sufferings of the righteous servant Israel." Herein is the greatness of that servant, herein is the life of all Israel, that "he hath surely borne our griefs," that "he is smitten of God—wounded for our transgressions. Jahweh hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased Jahweh to bruise him. He hath put him to grief."

We may observe here a beautiful trace of a characteristic of his age in the preacher's thought. It was an age of sacrifices, and the age of ritual was about to begin. Ezekiel had just portrayed a sacerdotal, sacrificial embodiment of religion. Our preacher says, "When Thou shalt make his life an offering for sin." What simpler expression could he give for the doctrine that filled his soul? We may advance in these latter days to think that human life and blood do not expiate human sin, that true sacrifice is a deed of the soul, and true expiation must be wrought by a direct influence on the soul. Nevertheless the simple words, "Thou shalt make His life an offering for sin," were simply true to the preacher's thought, true in their simplicity; and because they were true to the age, they shall stand eternally, revered, repeated, realised alway.

The preacher was not altogether mystical in the meaning which he read into God's providences. He had inherited from many generations a doctrine concerning the spiritual influence which Jahweh Himself exerts, or which is exerted through preachers and saints. He had inherited a very old doctrine that knowledge would make men righteous. We have seen that the doctrine was as old as Hosea, and that it had been developed largely and practically; for the Deuteronomist had sought to inculcate the knowledge that would save, and preachers who followed had also sought to save by declaring the mind of Jahweh and pointing to the knowledge of Him as the great end of their prophesying. Our preacher declares that the righteous Israel, servant of Jahweh, shall make many righteous (liii. 11). He shall deal prudently (lii. 13). All his children shall be taught of God (liv. 13). The remainder of the sermons in the book may be fitly described as instruction in righteousness (lv.; lviii.; lxi. 1), wherein the preacher strives to fulfil by his teaching, "by his knowledge," the "making many righteous." There come at times bursts of enthusiastic joy like those of the earlier chapters, but the

joy is more spiritual, it is joy that the people shall be all righteous, and the preacher prays especially for this righteousness (lix. 2; lxi. 3, 10; lxiv.). An allusion is made to the priestly tribe of Levi (lxvi. 21), but it is made that the prophet may declare the extension of the bounds of that tribe so that it may receive even the Gentiles; for within the priestly tribe all Israel are already counted. "All shall be named priests of Jahweh, men shall call them (*i.e.*, all Israel) ministers of their God" (lxi. 6).

We have arrived at that point in the development of belief which we set out to reach. We find a preacher who has discovered that salvation may not mean material deliverance, and that God's highest purpose for His sons may be that they suffer. The suffering righteous may work out the salvation of their sinful brethren; and God purposes this suffering of the righteous as an atonement for others. The sufferers may be considered as an offering for sin, whereby the nation submits to its offended God and presents to Him a symbolic acknowledgment of its deserts. But forasmuch as not the sinner but the righteous must be the mediating, actively atoning person, therefore the righteous sufferer is to exert a powerful influence on the mind and heart of the sinner; and since it is evident that not material comfort, but spiritual righteousness, is the goal of Israel, the righteous servant's atoning work must consist largely in the instruction of his fellows in righteousness.

It is evident now that the thirst of Amos for purity, the yearning of Hosea for knowledge that would sanctify, Isaiah's doctrine of the spiritual influence of a Present Jahweh, Micah's vision of the ideal man of God, the Deuteronomic Torah and its establishment of a holy atoning tribe, the suffering of the pleading Jeremiah, his search for a righteous man to atone for all, his labour to make men righteous, Ezekiel's meditative, vision-full repetition of that labour, are all germinal elements of this new, beautiful doctrine, and the new doctrine is the fragrant, beautiful blossom which crowns them all.

Our task is ended. And yet it would seem unfinished if there were no word added to hint what was the further history of such thoughts. The words shall be few.

Cyrus set the Jews free, and sent a multitude of them back to their fatherland in 537 B.C. Through the century that followed others were constantly returning. Only brave men would likely care to return at first to the desolated land, to raise their ruined homes, and to hew stones for a new temple. But at last, through the guiding earnestness of two heroic men, Ezra and Nehemiah, the temple rose, and round about Zion strong walls stood again. The rebuilding of that temple and those walls was a symbol of well nigh all the religious efforts of the people then, and for four centuries later. They were led by men of great devoutness

and great constructive power, at whose character the world ever since has wondered. Truly Ezra was a second Moses. But the people were freed slaves, the children of a generation of captives. Anxiously, timidly, they inquired what the Almighty would have them to "do that they might inherit eternal life." They busied themselves setting up and elaborating a system of ritual law, whose refinements astound us as we read a picture of them in the book of Leviticus. And yet Leviticus does not contain all the regulations, nor does it describe nearly all the punctilious performances of the Aaronic priesthood, the officially holy men, the formally appointed servants of Jahweh who made atonement—not with their own life, their own spiritual being—but with the life, the blood, of lambs and bullocks. A dark night had settled down at the close of the bright day in which the Babylonian preacher shone. Safety and ease in a quiet age resulted in formalism. For four centuries a sacerdotal atonement seemed sufficient; but all the while the nation's life was dying out. It was an age of spiritual decay, and the grand doctrine of the preacher of Babylon was forgotten. They forgot that every righteous man must be a saviour of others, and instead thereof called those men righteous who saved themselves by observing all the exactions of a fearful, ceremonial code.

And yet the wonderful sermons of the preachers of past centuries were not lost, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was indeed often read. But it became a custom when such passages were read in the synagogues, to explain them as not yet true of any men, to doubt silently the reality of the ideal Israel, and to say that there would one day come a Prince to wear the crown of David, who should be the true servant of Jahweh. The expectation was doomed to disappointment in so far as it looked for material royalty. Yet the form of this interpretation of the great classic passage was to be preserved. The grand meaning had been lost. The possibility of a righteous people saving their fellows was doubted, narrowed to a future possibility concerning one righteous prince. Yet the blind were led by a way they knew not, and at last their little hope had an unspeakably grand realisation; their mistake was a prediction of the coming truth. For Jesus came; one perfect, Divine man came; and in Him was manifest what all men might be; in Him was visible the goodness that had been in many hidden righteous men, and the goodness which was henceforth more possible through His drawing many more to be one with Himself in character, in purpose, in will, in life. That Head bore all the features by which the Body should be known. That Sacred Head was wounded, suffered unto death for the sins of His fellows; so His Body, His righteous people, always suffer. He accepted and they accept the Divine plan of life, that by such suffering of the righteous, the wrongdoers may be delivered from death, and may be

taught righteousness. Jesus's Person illuminates the grand doctrine of the Babylonian teacher, and so lightens up the life of the good with service and the life of the bad with hope.

Centuries ago some fair marbles, sculptured gracefully by Grecian or by Roman hands, were thrown from their pedestals by the invading barbarian hordes from north and east, flung rudely down and buried in the ruins of the mansions which they had adorned. Many generations later these treasures were discovered, but they who now found them could not appreciate them. The ignorant children of the barbarian conquerors, and of the ruined Romans had no understanding of the Beautiful. But the sculptures themselves were silent teachers; and by their teaching came knowledge, with knowledge admiration, until it might be said that the old marbles had educated men to love their beauty. To the awakened imagination of the world the sculptures lived and live as beauty realised. The light now shed upon them by every student of that beauty is a light that revives the ancient world, and sets the past before men as it once lived, and breathed, and loved. So this wonderful passage, the product of a master-hand, stood long thousands of years ago bringing joy to the souls who first heard it spoken. But it was lost, buried by ignorance, by formalism, by faithlessness. It was found again and yet not truly read, until the light that shone from Jesus's life and death kindled in men a sense of the truth of the old doctrine; and then the exceeding beauty of Jesus seemed revealed, glorified in the old sermon (Ep. Phil. i. 20; ii. 17; iii. 10). Jesus made men able to understand the truth and beauty of the passage; the passage became a wonderful exposition of Jesus (Acts viii. 30-35). By these words he to-day kindles men's souls with enthusiasm, love and power. The old sermon proclaims what he has done for men; it therefore tells what men may be and do for one another.





